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the subjective quality of the pupil is the aim, should they be suffered to take a subordinate place.

We hardly like to take leave of Dr. Carpenter, after so ungracious a review. It was not that there was little good to be said of his book, but the faults seemed the most important things to notice. We have left ourselves no space for some excellent passages which we had marked to extract, and we will therefore only say that *as far as it goes* its account of phenomena is admirable in every respect ; whilst as giving a rationale of education, or the formation of mental and moral character, it is one of the most valuable pedagogic publications of modern times. This, after all, is the end which the high-minded author probably had most at heart, and which he would most gladly see acknowledged.

11. — *Laocöon. An Essay upon the Limits of Painting and Poetry. With Remarks illustrative of various Points in the History of ancient Art.* By GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING. Translated by ELLEN FROTHINGHAM. Boston : Roberts Brothers. 1874. 16mo. pp. xi, 245.

It is a strange thing if, as Miss Frothingham seems to say, there was no English translation of Lessing's *Laocöon* until 1853. For the *Laocöon* was published in 1766, and for the last forty years at least we should think it would have been generally agreed that to Lessing more than to any other man modern criticism in matters of art owes its foundations. He had, to be sure, but little opportunity for cultivating his perceptions in plastic art, and only approached it from the side of poetry or of archæology, — yet his method holds good here too. It is very simple, — as simple as the way Columbus took to make the egg stand ; it may be summed up thus : Use your own eyes, and not your prejudices or your memory.

If any one thinks the lesson superfluous, or needed at any rate only for the "Wig-period," not for us, let him look about him in our streets. We have in Boston, set forth to view in the most conspicuous places, statues of Mr. Webster, Mr. Horace Mann, Mr. Everett ; and now it seems we are to have a statue of Mr. Sumner. Two of these are by sculptors of the very highest rank, and treated in that spirit of sincerity which Mr. Ruskin inculcates ; — the perplexities of modern costume fairly faced ; the coat and trousers historical, yet not too literal ; the men put before us as they lived and moved. Yet to whom are they — we will not say a joy forever, but — the occasion of a moment's real satisfaction ?

Is a portrait-statue then an impossible task? It was not always so. Go a little farther up the same street and see, in the vestibule of the Boston Athenæum, the Sophocles and the Menander. What an air of security and repose! No straining after effect here, for there is no need to strain. But the modern sculptor has to face a very different problem. We demand of him to put before us in stone or imperishable brass the *spirits* of our great men, and it is no wonder if the attempt ends in caricature. Fully to set forth the grounds of the exorbitant claims we make upon our sculptors would be a difficult undertaking, upon which we do not propose to enter. But that they exist and can neither be evaded nor satisfied is, we should think, plain enough from the invariable result. It is not merely that the imagination is trammelled by trivial associations and lets us down into prose; — turn from the Sophocles to the archway opposite, where the young Columbus on the top of his post is trying to look as the young Columbus ought to look. It is not wholly the sculptor's fault, it is our fault if the intensity is rather pathological than pathetic or poetical. It is our fault, for requiring the artist to violate the conditions of his art. Sculpture has this advantage, that it puts before us in bodily form what words can only suggest. But then this very definiteness and concreteness limits the expression to what a single moment can properly contain, and the effort to crowd in more can only make it overflow in grimace. The lesson is familiar enough, but we learn nothing from it because it does not suit our preconceived views, and so we attribute the punctual failure of each succeeding attempt to every cause but the right one.

It is here that criticism can help us, for good criticism is only the quintessence of experience. Every man with time enough, and if the interest lasted, would come to the right judgment; but the labor is too much for most of us; our minds are made up, and the succeeding impressions fail to take effect. Lessing has the immense power of taking pains, which in the critic at any rate constitutes genius; the unwearied, unbribable eye, the ever-alert judgment, that enable him to see things as they are. His rules accordingly are no conventional formulas of good taste, but the very conditions of the several arts themselves. A work of art, he says, is under no obligation, except to be beautiful. But for its own sake, and in order to be beautiful, it must confine itself to what it can adequately express without the help of anything else. Poetry must not describe; sculpture must not carve what can only be felt or suggested. Homer cannot put the beauty of Helen directly before us, nor Shakespeare the abyss of Dover Cliff, as a painter would, and the attempt would only give us, as Les-

sing says, the loose stones, not the building. He can only stir *us* up to reproduce the images for ourselves. But if he can do this, it matters not how ; a touch is enough, and then the picture is not tied down to the literal statement, but lives anew with every new reader. Helen's beauty is no longer identified with the precise contours and colors which the Trojans looked upon, but is whatever would affect us as they were affected. On the other hand, the sculptor must be content with his advantage, and not try to sculpture what is incidental and passing. His *Laocoön* must not cry out like Virgil's, or like the *Philoctetes*, — not because the expression of pain is unbecoming, but because in the marble he would never cease to cry out. The statue is a personified abstraction, and for its own sake must ignore whatever would disturb the total impression. It should be noticed, however, that the exclusion of the transitory does not mean that nothing of a transitory nature can be represented, but that nothing must be represented which *ought not* to endure. This rule does not exclude the *Discobolos* or the *Fighting Gladiator* ; for although these attitudes would be only momentary in real life, their beauty is not, and it is with their beauty alone that we are concerned. Lessing perhaps did not always attend to this distinction ; yet he insisted, against Winckelmann, that the *repose* of the antique is not the cause, but the consequence, of beauty ; that the ancient sculptor did not choose a pose or an expression of face which could be kept up for an indefinite length of time, but one that is delightful without regard to time. This is the *classic* quality, to lift us above all memory or consideration of what is local or temporary.

Lessing, as was natural to him and most needed in the Germany of his day, had an eye chiefly to poetry : he was thinking of Homer and of the contrast between his treatment of a subject and the maxims in favor with the virtuosos of the eighteenth century. For us the application is rather to plastic art ; but the principle is still the same, namely, to let the nature of the work supply the rules whereby it is to be judged, and to depend for our judgment upon a close scrutiny of our impressions, neither lightly accepting nor lightly rejecting them, and not upon any outside considerations however obvious or imposing.

So completely have Lessing's ideas been absorbed into modern criticism that everybody is familiar with them at second-hand at least ; but it is necessary to see him actually at work, exemplifying in every touch what he taught, in order to appreciate fully the immense common-sense, the rectitude, and the quick intelligence of the man.

Miss Frothingham's version seems to us excellent ; it reads easily, and at the same time has much of the conciseness and point of the original. With a good deal of searching we have been able to find a few passages which seem to need correction. On p. x, of the Preface, *Afterkritik* is "spurious," rather than "faultfinding," criticism. P. xi, "savor more of the *fountain*" hardly translates "*mehr nach der Quelle schmecken*"; "*fountain-head*" would perhaps answer. On p. 109, the first sentence needs revision in order to make it English. On p. 124, the last sentence should read, "My opinion is that true perspective in pictures was hit upon incidentally through scene-painting; but even when that art was already in its perfection it must still have been no easy task to apply its rules to a single plane," etc. On p. 171, "*argutie*" is rather "subtilities of detail" than "traits of animation." P. 183, the "*Borghese Gladiator*" is better known as the "*Fighting Gladiator*"; and at this place it might be mentioned that Lessing afterwards withdrew the conjecture (for once not a very happy one) that it was a statue of Chabrias.

12. — *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development.* By WILLIAM STUBBS, M. A., Regius Professor of Modern History. Vol. I. Oxford: At the Clarendon Press. 1874.

THE authority of Professor Stubbs deservedly stands so high, that a critic who undertakes to deal with his works must always feel the task to be one of no little difficulty and danger. His name has often been mentioned in the pages of this Review, and always with respect and praise. He is not only learned and accurate, but, unlike some of his rivals in the same field, his judgment is admirable, and his caution almost excessive. As Regius Professor at Oxford, he gives dignity to the study of history. Even yet this study stands at that University in comparatively slight esteem, overshadowed as it still is by the prescriptive authority of the classics; and the present work is doubly valuable if it is an evidence that Oxford intends at last to interest herself seriously in the history of England, and to tolerate no longer that indifference which has thus far left the national annals in the hands of Scotchmen or amateurs. A scientific training is as necessary to the historian as to the mathematician, and it is the misfortune of England that she has never yet had a scientific historical school.

Mr. Stubbs's first volume deals with the constitutional history of England during the long period of seven centuries between the first